533*
539*
593

Qua'm perd' un garçon main jain' l'aut' oh!
Ma rélé,
Oh qua'm perdit manman main ma crié! [Ex. 102]

I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!

533*
539*
261

Protest or complaint songs are sometimes directed against no one in particular but simply call the attention of listeners to the singer's misfortunes. In many such songs the president or one of the deities is mentioned by name. The singer in this way implicitly places responsibility for help. In the following song, one complains of hunger, another theme that runs throughout Haitian folklore and Haitian life.

Rwa! Président qui voyé rélé'm!
Main pas bwè main pas mangé!
M'pas bwè main pas mangé!
Oh m'pas bwè main pas mangé!
Président qui voyé rélé'm rwa!
M'pas bwè main pas mangé! [Ex. 103]

Rwa! * The President sends for me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
Oh, I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
The President sends for me, *rwa!*
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!

533*
539*
521
[176]
[182]

Here the loa Ogoun Balindjo is called upon to take note of prying, insincere people who come to a person's house, observe what is going on, and go away to gossip:

Ogoun Balindjo
Yo vini gu'dé'm
Pou' y'allé valé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Li yé wè bouche yé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Pas wè yo vini gu'dé manin? [Ex. 104]

Ogoun Balindjo
They come to look at me

* An exclamation.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

"The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment. Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons describes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

5. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.

6. *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4–5.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

apparently hale and hearty, but lassitude sapping all energy. A group of doctors from the Rockefeller Foundation discovered that among 4,439 persons examined in various surveys two decades ago sixty-seven per cent showed malarial parasites in the blood. Since the American Occupation steps have been taken to control the disease and much progress has resulted: some of the towns are now practically free of it. But the battle against malaria will never be won so long as the anopheles mosquito breeds in the island; it means an endless war of constant vigilance as well as education—one which must be carried on simultaneously in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Hookworm, like malaria, is also ordinarily quite undramatic in its symptoms. There is no specific pain, but rather a progressive inertia. Since practically every country person goes barefoot it would be miraculous if hookworm were not widespread, for sanitation is entirely lacking in peasant communities. Dr. Lhérisson reported in 1935 that twenty-six per cent of the mass of Haitian people examined up to that time had been found infested by hookworms. The final figure will probably be revised upward, for the persons most easily examined are townspeople who have better sanitation and more shoes. Only the Cul-de-Sac plain, extending east from Port-au-Prince, is free of the disease, for the larvae do not develop in salty ground. Hookworm attacks not only the barefoot, but likewise the well shod. Poor sanitation and geophagy suggest themselves as two explanations of this fact.

Like malaria, hookworm has been accepted calmly enough as one of the normal burdens of life. In slave days and for some time thereafter it was called "stomach trouble," and since it was common, was not even a case for the Vodun practitioner. It was not until 1924 that the Rockefeller Foundation through its Payne mission revealed the significance of the disease and began to establish dispensaries in country districts and undertake a campaign of sanitation. If every Haitian were to wear shoes the incidence of the disease would, of course, decidedly decrease; but the advice to wear shoes is a counsel of perfection, for large peasant families are no more able to afford this luxury than all American families are able to buy champagne and caviar. Progress has been made along the lines of hygiene and sanitation, but hookworm continues to undermine the energy of the people.

Yaws is, of the morbid triad, the most virulent and the common-